

THE  
L I F E  
O F  
A C H I L L E S. K

Extracted from Various Authors;

Necessary to be Perus'd by the

READERS *and* SPECTATORS

Of the New OPERA, call'd,

A C H I L L E S.

Written by the late Mr. G A Y,

---

L O N D O N,

Printed: And Sold by J. ROBERTS  
in *Warwick-Lane*, 1732.

[Price Six Pence.]

THE

ACADEMY

Extracts from Various Authors

Necessary to be Perused by the

READING AND SELECTORS

OF THE NEW OPERA

446  
9 4  
5824

Written by the late Mr. G. G.



Printed by



THE  
LIFE  
OF  
ACHILLES.

**A**CHILLES was born at  
*Phthia* in *Thessaly*, about  
1200 Years before the  
Christian *Æra*. He was  
the Son of *Peleus* King of *Thessaly*,  
and *Thetis*, said by the Poets to be  
the Goddess of the Sea. When he  
was a Child, he is reported, by the  
same Poets, to have been plung'd  
A 2 by



4      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

by his Mother over Head and Ears in the infernal River of *Styx*, by which means every Part of his Body was render'd invulnerable, except the Heel which his Mother held him by at the time of Immersion. Both these Accounts will soon appear to the Reader to be equally true, or rather equally fabulous. But the Gentlemen of *Parnassus*, from whom we have our chief Intelligence, thought they could not sufficiently magnify his uncommon Courage, and great Success in the Field, without describing him superior, both in Birth and Person, to the common Race of Mortals.

Whilst he was yet very young, he was put under the Tutorage and Discipline of *Chiron* the *Centaur*. This *Chiron* is said to have been the Son of *Saturn*, and *Philira* his Mistress; who being at a certain Time surpris'd together by *Ops*, *Saturn's* Wife,



The LIFE of Achilles. 5

Wife, *Saturn*, to prevent being known by her, turn'd himself into a Horse; by which means, when *Philira* came to be deliver'd, she brought forth a Creature, whose upper Part was Man, and the lower Part a Horse. This *Chiron* became a famous Physician; he taught *Æsculapius* Physick, *Apollo* Musick, and *Hercules* Astronomy; and lastly, he was Tutor to our Hero *Achilles*, whom he is said to have given no other Food to, but the Marrow of Lions, Stags, and other wild Beasts. But this we must take for granted, to be only said in order to account for the Courageousness and Fierceness of his Temper. The Soothsayer *Calchas*, having foretold the *Grecian* Chiefs, who were preparing to go to the Siege of *Troy*, that 'twas impossible for them to succeed in their Expedition against that Town, unless *Achilles* went along with

6      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

with 'em; his Mother, who was at the same time inform'd by the Oracle, that if he join'd in that Enterprize he would certainly be slain in it, sent and took him away privately from his Tutor; and, to prevent his being prevail'd on to go to the Siege, she disguis'd him in the Habit of a Girl, and plac'd him in the Court of King *Lycomedes*. *Achilles* was then not more than Twelve Years old, and took upon him the Name of *Pyrrha*. He went as a Companion to the Daughters of *Lycomedes*, and being a beautiful Youth, his Disguise became him so well, that all the Galants in *Lycomedes's* Court were immediately enamour'd with him. Every one strove by different Ways, and according to their different Talents, to gain the Favour of the fair Stranger. — The Beau drew his Snuff-Box, the Wit his Quill, and the Soldier his Scimitar,

in

in pursuit of their Conquest; which gave no small Diversion to our young Hero in Petticoats, who began to know by this time what Sex he was of.

Amongst the Daughters of *Lycomedes*, the fairest and most engaging was the Princess *Deidamia*, for whom *Achilles* soon began to feel a Passion, very different from that of one Female to another. At last the Violence of his Inclination made him break thro' all Considerations, and discover himself to her as they were in Bed together. The Consequence of which will be soon guess'd by the Reader, when he is inform'd, that by this Princess he had afterwards a Son, who was the famous *Pyrrhus*.

Our Young Prince for some time continu'd secure and undiscover'd in this Disguise; but at last *Calchas* the Soothsayer, whom we mention'd before, having discover'd what Place  
his



8      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

his Mother had conceal'd him in;  
the crafty *Ulysses* was sent to the  
Court of *Lycomedes* to find him out,  
and demand his Return. *Ulysses*, not  
knowing him in his Female Attire  
from the other Ladies of the Court,  
and being willing to pitch at once  
upon his right Man, resolv'd on  
the following Stratagem for that  
Purpose. One Day, when there  
was a grand Assembly at Court to  
compliment the King upon some  
particular Occasion, *Ulysses* took the  
Opportunity to make Presents to all  
the Ladies, of some Jewels and  
Trinkets he had brought with that De-  
sign. The whole Cargo being spread  
abroad for each Lady to please her  
Fancy, and choose for her self,  
whilst some were snatching at one  
Bauble, and some at another, Na-  
ture most unfortunately peep'd thro'  
the Veil, and led our young Hero  
to pitch on a Set of Armour, which  
*Ulysses*

The LIFE of Achilles. 9

*Ulysses* had mix'd with the rest, as the Touchstone to discover his Warrior by.

*Ulysses* having thus cunningly gain'd his Ends, he soon prevail'd on *Achilles* to throw off his effeminate Habit, and give a loose to his war-like Genius, which had been so long smother'd. Upon which he speedily follow'd the *Greeks* to *Troy*, where he perform'd a great Number of Heroick Actions during the Siege of that Town.

In this War, the *Greeks* having sack'd some of the neighbouring Towns, and bore off from thence two beautiful Captives; the one, whose Name was *Chryseis*, was allotted to *Agamemnon* General of all the *Grecian* Forces; and the other, whose Name was *Briseis*, fell to the Share of *Achilles*. *Chryseis*, *Agamemnon's* Captive, happen'd to be Daughter to the Priest of *Apollo*,  
B whole

whose Father came immediately to the *Grecian* Camp, and offer'd a considerable Sum for her Ransom; but being refus'd his Request, and insolently treated and dismiss'd by *Agamemnon*, he intreated for Vengeance from his God, who comply'd with his Prayer, and inflicted a terrible Pestilence on the *Greeks*. Upon this *Achilles* calls a general Council, and encourages *Calchas* to declare the Cause of their dreadful Desolation; who immediately attributes it to the Refusal of *Chryseis*, and the Ill-treatment of her Father the Priest. The King being thus oblig'd to give up his Captive, enters into a furious Contest with *Achilles*; and, as he had an absolute Command of the Army, takes *Briseis* from him in Revenge; insisting, that as Commander in Chief, he had Power of taking for himself whatever part of the Prey he pleas'd; and that as he  
had



*The LIFE of Achilles.* 11

had been oblig'd by *Achilles* to restore what he had pitch'd on, it was but just that he should have a second Choice.

*Achilles*, on the other hand, pleads that *Agamemnon* could not seize upon any other Man's Captive, without a new distribution, it being an Invasion of private Property. But *Agamemnon* still persisting in his demand, and treating *Achilles* in a contemptuous manner, his Fury is rais'd to such a Degree, that he draws his Sword and attempts the King's Life in the Council. In the very Moment of Execution, *Pallas* the Goddess of Wisdom descends, and being seen only by *Achilles* seizes on him, and withheld him from his Purpose. He parlies with her for some time, imagining she would suffer him, upon hearing his wrongs, to proceed; but upon her promising him a Time, wherein there should

12      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

be a full Reparation of his Honour, he sheaths his Sword in obedience to her Dictates. But no sooner had the Goddess left him, and regain'd the Summit of *Olympus*, but he falls again upon his General with bitter Invectives. At last the Quarrel rising to the highest extravagance, *Nestor* the wisest and most aged of the *Greeks* interfer'd, and endeavour'd to appease the Contest. He sides with neither, that he might not anger any one, while he advises them to the proper Methods of Reconciliation; and he appears to side with both, while he praises each, that they might be induc'd, by the Recollection of one another's Worth, to return to that Amity which would bring Success to their Enterprize.

Tho' this Speech had not full Success, yet the Violence, with which the Dispute was manag'd, immediately abated upon it; *Agamemnon* confess'd,

*The LIFE of Achilles.* 13

fess'd, that all he spoke was right, and *Achilles* promises to contend no longer for his Captive, upon which the Council immediately dissolv'd.

*Achilles*, however, not being able to brook the Loss of his *Briseis*, withdrew himself and all his Forces from the rest of the *Greeks*; and complaining to his Mother *Thetis* of the Injury he suffer'd, she supplicated *Jupiter* to render the *Greeks* sensible of it, by giving Victory to the *Trojans*. *Jupiter*, in pursuance of this Request, sends a deceitful Vision to *Agamemnon*, perswading him to lead the Army to Battle, in order to make them feel the want of *Achilles*: he accordingly draws up the *Grecian* Troops for an Engagement; and after a single Combat betwixt *Menelaus* and *Paris*, *Pandarus* breaks the Truce by wounding *Menelaus*: a Battle ensues and great Numbers are slain on both



14      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

both sides, without any visible Advantage on either. In a second Battle the *Greeks* were distressed, and driven to their Fortifications before the Ships. After this Defeat *Agamemnon* is prevailed upon, by the Council, to send Ambassadors to *Achilles*, in order to move him to a Reconciliation, whom he rejects with roughness and scorn. In the third Battle, which for some time was dubious, *Nestor* holds a Conversation with *Achilles* in his Tent, which tended to put *Patroclus*, that Hero's much beloved Friend, upon persuading *Achilles* to fight for his Countrymen, or at least to permit him to do it, clad in *Achilles's* Armour; the last he with great difficulty consented to, but not till the *Grecian* Trenches were forc'd, and their Ships in danger of being set on Fire; at the same time he gave it him

him in strict Charge to content himself with rescuing the Fleet, without farther pursuit of the Enemy.

The brave *Patroclus* issued forth in the Armour and Chariot of *Achilles*, and at the Head of his Troops, to save the *Grecian* Fleet and Army from impending Ruin: the *Trojans* at the sight of *Patroclus* in *Achilles's* Armour, taking him for that Hero, were cast into the uttermost Consternation: he soon beat them off from the Vessels; *Hector* himself flies, and *Sarpedon* is kill'd: but in the heat of the Action, *Patroclus*, neglecting the Orders he had receiv'd from *Achilles*, pursues the Foe to the Walls of *Troy*; where repuls'd and disarm'd by *Apollo*, *Hector* kills him.

The News of *Patroclus's* Death was brought to *Achilles* by *Antilochus*; upon which he gave himself up to Despair, with a Weakness which *Plato* could not pardon in him, and which could

16      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

could only be excus'd on account of the long and close Friendship betwixt him and the Deceas'd. His Mother *Thetis*, with her Sea-Nymphs, hearing his Lamentations, came to comfort him: *Achilles* vents his Grief to her in terms, wherein were express'd the most lively and beautiful Strokes of Nature and Passion, all that the truest Friend, the most tender Son, and the most generous Hero cou'd feel in this delicate and affecting Circumstance. His Fury now takes another Channel, and his Eagerness of Revenge turns from *Agamemnon* who had forc'd away his Mistress, upon *Hector* who had robb'd him of his Friend.

After having calmly consider'd the present State of his Life, he deliberately embrac'd his approaching Fate, and comforted himself under it by a Reflexion on those great Men, whom neither their illustrious Actions,  
nor



*The LIFE of Achilles.* 17

nor their affinity to Heaven, could save from the general Doom. I shall have Time enough, said he, for inglorious Rest when I am laid in the Grave, but now I must act like a living Hero: I shall, indeed, lie down in Death before the Walls of *Troy*, as the Oracle foretold, but at the same Time I shall rise higher in Glory.

*Yes I will meet the Murderer of  
my Friend;*

*Or, if the Gods ordain it, meet my  
End.*

*Homer's Iliad.*

He was that Moment rushing to the Fight, had not his Mother *Thetis* dissuaded him, and prevail'd on him to defer his Intention till the next Morning, by which time she promis'd to procure him a new Set of Armour from *Vulcan*. In the mean time the Battle raged more and more,

C

the

18     *The LIFE of Achilles.*

the *Greeks* doing their utmost to bear off the Body of *Patroclus*, and the *Trojans*, with *Hector* at their Head, striving to take it from them; which they were upon the point of effecting, when *Iris* was dispatch'd by *Juno* to *Achilles* to inform him of the Danger, and advise him to shew himself at the Head of the Intrenchments.

*Achilles* instantly comply'd with the Commands of the Goddess; he mounted the Ramparts, and the very Sight of him at once turn'd the Fortune of the Day. The *Trojans* no sooner saw him, and heard his Voice, but they fled from their Conquest trembling and confounded, whilst, by the same means, the *Greeks* brought off the Body of *Patroclus* with ease and security. Upon sight of the Corps the Grief of *Achilles* is renew'd, and his Lamentation over it was excessive, but it was

was still such Sorrow as became a Hero. I shall soon pursue thee, on the darksome way, my dear *Patroclus*, said he, yet this I promise thee, that before these dear Relicts are laid in the Grave, *Hector's* Head shall be offer'd to thy *Manes*. He then order'd the Attendants to wash and cleanse every honour'd Wound, to embalm his Body, and lay it on a Bed of State, decently cover'd with a milk-white Veil.

Mean while *Thetis* arrives at the Palace of *Vulcan*, and, to compass her Design, recounts every thing to the Advantage of her Son. She accordingly succeeded, and *Vulcan* immediately compleated a glorious Set of Armour for her Hero, which she flies from *Olympus* to present him with. She found him still stretch'd over the Corpse of his Friend, and in Tears; but



20      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

no sooner did he cast his Eyes on the divine Workmanship, but it rais'd him once more to Life and Glory. His Mother then promis'd him to preserve the Body of his Friend from Corruption, and order'd him to assemble the Army, and declare his Resentment at an end. Which being done, *Achilles* and *Agamemnon* were solemnly reconcil'd, and *Achilles* was so desirous to be upon Action, that he was scarce perswaded by *Ulysses* to refrain from Battle till the Troops had refresh'd themselves. The Presents, which were made by *Agamemnon* to *Achilles* upon their Reconciliation, were then convey'd to his Tent, amongst which was *Briseis* the lovely Captive, who had been the Cause of all the Contention betwixt the two Princes. She made great Lamentations over the Body of *Patroclus*, and *Achilles* himself

himself continu'd obstinately to refuse all Repast, and gave himself over to Sorrow for his Friend.

At length the Hour appointed for Battle being come, he equips himself in the divine Armour which *Vulcan* had made for him; and, mounting his Chariot, he reproaches his Horses with not bringing *Patroclus* back to him in safety, and then eagerly rush'd with Fury to the Combat. The *Greek* and *Trojan* Armies encounter, and the first whom *Achilles* engag'd with was the great *Aeneas*; but he was preserv'd from his Fury by the assistance of *Neptune*. Upon which *Achilles* fell upon the rest of the *Trojans*, and made very great Havock; and at last, meeting with *Hector*, was upon the point of killing him, when *Apollo* interpos'd and convey'd him away in a Cloud. *Achilles* continu'd

22      *The LIFE of Achilles.*

to pursue the *Trojans* with excessive Slaughter, who fled before him into the Town: *Agenor* only made a stand, who was likewise convey'd away in a Cloud by *Apollo*; who, to delude *Achilles*, takes upon him *Agenor's* Shape; and, while he pursues him in that Disguise, gave the *Trojans* an opportunity of retiring into their City.

The *Trojans* being safe within the Walls, *Hector* only stays to oppose *Achilles*. *Priam* was struck at his Approach, and endeavour'd to persuade his Son to re-enter the Town; *Hecuba* at the same time joining her Intreaties, but all to no purpose: However, at the Advance of *Achilles*, his Resolution fail'd him, and he fled before him. *Achilles* pursu'd him thrice round the Walls of *Troy*, till at length, fir'd with Shame and Indignation, he stood  
the



the Combat, and was unhappily slain in it. No sooner had *Achilles* got the Victory over his Enemy, than, eager to be reveng'd for the Death of *Patroclus*, he drag'd the dead Body at his Chariot round the Walls of the Town. After this, *Achilles* and his *Myrmidons* paid the Funeral Rites to the Body of *Patroclus*, and sacrific'd twelve *Trojan* Captives at his Pile. He then plac'd his Bones in an Urn of Gold, and instituted several Funeral Games in Honour of him, viz. the Chariot-Race, the Fight of the *Cæstus*, the Wrestling, the Foot-Race, the Single Combat, the *Discus*, the Shooting with Arrows, and the Darting of the Javelin. In the mean time old King *Priam* arrives at the Tent of *Achilles*, with Presents to redeem the Body of *Hector*; who, mov'd with Compassion at the Grief of  
the

24      *The* LIFE of Achilles.

the venerable Sire, comply'd with his Request, and generously dismiss'd him the next Morning with the Body.

But now the Conqueror's Hour was come, and *Hector's* Brother soon sent his Murderer after him to the Shades. *Achilles* being enamour'd with *Polyxena*, the fair Daughter of *Priam*, met the Father by Appointment in the Temple of *Apollo*, to treat about his Marriage with her; no sooner had he enter'd the Doors of the Temple, than *Paris*, who had hid himself behind the Statue of *Apollo*, treacherously shot him with an Arrow, which unfortunately hit that Part of him which was alone said to be vulnerable.

Thus fell the greatest Hero that History boasts of, a Warrior so brave and valiant, that his  
Name

*The LIFE of Achilles.* 25

Name became a Distinction, to succeeding Ages, of supreme Valour and unconquerable Spirit. He was buried at the *Sigean* Promontory; and the *Greeks* made a magnificent Funeral for him. After his Death *Ajax* and *Ulysses*, two of the *Grecian* Princes, contended for his Divine Armour the Workmanship of *Vulcan*, which was gain'd by *Ulysses*. Soon after this *Troy* was taken by the well-known Stratagem of the Wooden Horse; and, after the Sacking of the Town, *Polyxena*, who was found amongst the rest of the Captives, was sacrific'd at the Tomb of *Achilles* by *Pyrrhus* his Son, as his Ghost had demanded.

*Achilles* was not only a mere Soldier, and without any other Qualification but Strength; he was a Person likewise of excellent Sense and sound Reason, and possess'd the

D more



more amiable Virtues of Friendship and Humanity. His Person was so graceful, that his very Enemies were astonish'd at his manly Beauty. He was likewise a great Lover of Musick and Poetry, which was instill'd into him by his Tutor *Chiron*. So that tho' Courage was his most distinguishing Character, yet *Achilles* was admirable both for the Endowments of Body and Mind.

**F I N I S.**

---

N. B. It may not be improper here to advertise the Reader, that Mr. *Gay's* new Play is founded upon that Part of the Story of *Achilles*, where he is disguis'd in a Female Habit in the Court of *Lycomedes*; but tho' the Talk of that Performance

mance gave us the Hint of drawing up this History, yet we did not think proper to confine our selves to relate that Part only which is the Subject of the Play, but to give the Reader a compleat View of the Life and Exploits of that famous Hero; a single Act of whose Resentment gave Occasion to the noblest Poem that ever appear'd in the World, I mean the *Iliad* of *Homer*. And this we presume will be the more acceptable, as the History of this great Man has not been yet compil'd by any one Writer, we being oblig'd to have recourse to a great many different Authors to compleat our Relation.



The first of Aristotle  
 gave us the first of following  
 up the history, yet we do not  
 think proper to confine our lives  
 to read that Part only which is  
 the Subject of the Play, but to give  
 the Reader a complete View of the  
 Life, and Exploits of that famous  
 Hero; a single View of whole Re-  
 sistance give Satisfaction to the no-  
 ble Poet than ever reported in the  
 World. I think of Homer.  
 And this will be the  
 more agreeable the History of  
 this great Man has not been yet  
 compiled by any one Writer, we  
 being oblig'd to have recourse to a  
 great many different Authors to  
 compile out a History.





